

## [W. B. Currie]

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[Folkstuff:?] [Range-lore?]

Mrs. Annie McAulay

Maverick, Texas. Duplicate

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### RANGE-LORE

W. B. ([WICKERS?]) Currie, was born in Guadalupe County, in September 1870. He came with his parents to Hamilton County when he was six years old. The family moved to Concho County in 1879. There he remained with his parents until 1891. While still a very young man, he began working for The Concho Land and Cattle Company in Concho County. Later he moved to North Texas where he lived for a number of years before coming to Runnels County.

"I worked", he says, "for The Concho Cattle and Land Company for four or five years. Most of this time was spent punching cattle. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 I was sent for short periods of time to Runnels County and other places to work.

"My job was like that of any other cowboy of that time. I helped with round-ups, branded cattle, rode broncs, drove cattle to market or to other pastures. And we all had to be able if we were told to ride broncs, too, no matter how mean. They was never considered too tough for riders to ride. I don't recall any terrible mean horses like some I've heard of, but I know a sight of 'em that wouldn't be called gentle. I never saw any rider get killed by a bronc but have seen some pretty well banged up, in fact, I came near getting a busted leg

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myself once. I was trying to bust in a pretty tough pacer, when he got the upper hand and threw me. I landed hard on my leg. I didn't break it, but was laid up for a few days.

"The longest cattle drive I ever made was in 1889. I helped to drive 2500 head of cattle to Amarillo, to market then for D. [M?] Simms of Paint Rock. Bob Pierce was boss of the outfit which consisted of eleven men, including the cook and horse wrangler. We had, I guess, a lot of trouble. The herd stampeded several times. We lost the whole business of that honery held one night in a storm.

"We had camped for the night on The Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos river when the stampede occurred. The country in them parts is awful rough and hilly. We had all the cattle bedded down and most of us had gone to sleep when we were awakened to find that the sky had darkened 3 and the rumble of thunder was drawing near. We were all in the saddle in less time than it takes to say Jack Robinson, and the cattle were already beginning to stir. Well, we began riding 'round them, trying to keep them together and talking or singing to them. The storm broke about eleven o'clock, and what a storm, wind, hail, rain and electricity. It seemed like hell was bustin' wide open. It was dark as could be except for the lightning which was blinding and didn't help much. All the odds seemed to be against us. We rode, whooped, yelled and sang, but there was no use. Them dogies was hell bound for the hills. We lost the whole dog-gone outfit of 'em.

"We found all of the herd next morning- or practically all of it- but I'm telling you that was about the worst experience I had while punching cattle. I know of two others besides myself that was with that drive that are still living. Old John Henderson, now a retired merchant of Coleman, is one of them, and Phil. Wright, who is Chief Fireman in the city of San Antonio is the other one.

"I went from Concho County to Motley County, Texas. I worked on the Matador Ranch in that county two years. I then drifted to Cattle County in 1892, I believe it was, in fact I helped to organize the county. There weren't many settlers in them parts at that time. We'd

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see Indians occasionally, but they were harmless. While in Cottle County I worked for The Richards Brothers' Cattle Company. I was married in 1893 to Addie Brothers 4 of Cottle County. We moved to Runnels County in 1895 and settled at Ballinger, where we have reared our family.

"I never had any Indian encounters in the early days, although I've seen a few of the redskins who weren't to be considered civilized. But there is something I know, and that is that people had to suffer many hardships in this section of the country in the early days of my life here. There were drouths and the houses most of them, were poor. Often the people had to go without some of the real necessities of life. But after all, those were good old days. We had many good times together with the best neighbors in the world. People as a rule were honest, religious and kind. Yes I'm glad I was a range rider and glad too that I lived at that time."